

## A typology of cultures

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# A Typology of Cultures

*Mary Douglas*

I have chosen to talk about credibility and reflexivity because this is (I imagine) the sort of thing you expect from an anthropologist. They used to say that the big difference between anthropology and sociology was not method, or history of the discipline, so much as focus of interests; sociology, they would say, is driven by its concern for current social problems, anthropology falls only too easily into metaphysics and collectibles, erotic and exotic. To do honour to this occasion, I have picked one problem on which to fasten my professional speculations: the biosphere. The question is whether it is endangered and if so whether we should do anything about it? On this topic I will ask whether the bad prophecies of the scientists are credible. From credibility in general my speculations will be led to culture and to reflexivity.

During the last few hundred years human action has drastically modified the natural environment. No one is going to doubt the transformations that we have effected, as to the disappearance of forests, as to the drainage of wetlands, as to irrigation of dry lands, the extension and conversion of grazing lands. Given this agreement among scientists (and ourselves) as to the past, what I find really interesting is the disagreement about the future.

Is there really a global catastrophe ahead of the world? Some say No; most scientists think it probable. Is there something we should do about it? Most scientists say definitely Yes, but the response from lay people is very divided. I want to examine today the distribution of belief and unbelief. Like anthropologists we can distance ourselves from the case, considering which scientists we should credit, the soothsayers or the doom sayers, as if it were the same kind of problem as that of the credibility of medicine, or of religious scepticism and fundamentalism in the modern world.

How are we to give an account of unbelief? When it is a matter of harm from carcinogens, there is the excuse that the scientists are divided.<sup>1</sup> When the question is whether to be for or against nuclear power for peaceful puposes, again the scientists are divided.<sup>2</sup> But in the case of the harm we are doing to the biosphere they speak with remarkable unity. Their consensus is all the more impressive in that science in general has become much more cautious. It is less confident of its claims than it was 50 years ago.

The problem of the greenhouse effect takes us through the long sweep of human history. It is partly a question of scale. What used to be local incidents of pollution or damage now involve many nations. The choice between ecological conservation and economic growth now reflects complex linkages. Energy and agriculture feed back to deforestation and climatic change.<sup>3</sup> We have moved from a regional to a global scale. The new integrative perspective emphasizes biogeochemical processes and their connections with climate. Parallel to the scientific effort, the broad patterns of human development have been studied in the world-system view of modern history. The modern world supports three times the human population and 100 times the industrial activity that it did 100 years ago. That is rapid change. As William Clark says in his introduction to *Sustainable Development of the Bio-sphere*,

a new intellectual mood »has focused on the interplay of institutions, technologies, and resources over what Braudel has called *la longue durée*, thus providing fertile ground for the collaboration of economists, historians and geographers«.<sup>4</sup>

Presumably individual sociologists are engaged in this fervent discussion of the future of our globe. But I do not hear loud or clear professional voices. In every scientific overview I read some tribute to what is called »the social component«, but I do not see that the sociologists feel bound to engage professionally on what this social component is and how it works.

Most scholars treat the relevant period as the last 300 years. That is approximately from the bloodless English Revolution of 1688 through the bloody French Revolution whose bicentennial we will celebrate next year, and on through the 19th century to today. In that time a number of processes have created our present world order and, it is widely agreed, have produced seemingly irreversible changes. Here I quote from J. F. Richards<sup>5</sup> for a wide-angle view of the historical trends.

- 1 Expansion of the European frontier of settlement into the New World, the great Eurasian steppe, and Australasia.
- 2 Steady growth in human population from 641 million estimated for 1700 to 4435 million estimated for 1980.
- 3 Dramatic growth in the spatial extent of cities and their population.
- 4 Increased use of fossil fuels and hydroelectric power, thus creating a revolution in transport, communications and industrial production.
- 5 Development of scientific methods, institutions and means for research and discovery.
- 6 Development of new weaponry with global reach and capacity for near-global destruction.
- 7 Dramatic increase in our ability to cure the body and curb disease.
- 8 Growth in scale, efficiency and stability of complex organisation (i.e. bureaucracies).
- 9 Emergence of self-regulating, price-fixing global markets for goods and services.

- 10 Emergence of a world division of labour between the North (or core) developed countries and the developing countries of the South (or periphery).

That sums it up, except for a drastic effect on the peoples whom anthropologists traditionally study. We have to add that along with all of this has gone the expansion of more intensive sedentary agriculture and in consequence the squeeze on tribal peoples engaged in shifting cultivation or in pastoral nomadism.

Evidently our cultural bias over this period has been towards expansion. We have made ourselves very efficient in exploiting natural resources. But these social and scientific trends have had the following effects on the environment.

1. World expansion of arable land: for every region an enormous and unreversed growth of arable land, to match the demand from swelling populations, and resulting in a near doubling of the pace of soil erosion in the world.
2. Deforestation, woods and forests in retreat before the advance of arable land.

»As early as the seventeenth century the forested plains of eastern Germany and Poland underwent steady clearance and plowing as the market for eastern European wheat expanded. By the eighteenth century New World lands in eastern North America and in coastal Brazil felt pressures for marketable wood and arable land. By the early nineteenth century forested covers in India and the midwestern USA were being felled for development purposes, and in the mid-nineteenth century rapid deforestation had begun in Himalayan India, Australasia, Southeast Asia, South Africa, Manchuria, Taiwan, and elsewhere. The end of the century brought east and west Sub-Saharan Africa, the American far west and Siberia into this process. The twentieth century has seen a nearly global onslaught on woodlands, with, after World War II, swelling pressures for economic development in the era of decolonisation.«

3. The drainage of wetlands, especially with use of new technology since 1870, has dramatically increased. The drying up of marshes and swamps releases stored carbon into the atmosphere and changes water tables. When this type of habitat disappears, many plant and animal species retreat or disappear too, and tribal communities who used to live on them are forced to work as sharecroppers in the new agricultural regime.
4. Irrigation of arid lands is a major environmental change. The trend to controlled watering and cultivation of dry lands means that few rivers flowing through arid or semi-arid regions remain untapped by irrigation schemes, with effects on the world hydrological cycle. As Professor Richards says:

Making the deserts bloom corresponds to some of our deepest aesthetic and cultural instincts. The drama of towering dams, huge turbines, and massive canal systems has made large irrigation systems one index of modernity (:63).

5. Grazing lands of the world have been reduced in favour of arable and heavy, sustained grazing for supplying meat to the increased human population finally depletes the grasslands.

Summing up, Richards says that in the relatively short period since 1700 human control over the natural environment has transformed it into an anthropogenic or human-determined system:

By far the most important reason for the changes that have occurred in the biota, the atmosphere, and the oceans is the growing efficiency and global scale of man's economic activity. (:68)

His wide-angled survey is a corrective to the way we usually hear of threats and disasters, which is one at a time, encouraging hope for item-by-item solutions. But the bio-sphere is one range of interlinked problems, not caused by car-drivers as such, nor now suddenly by domestic use of aerosol pumps or even by recent cutting down of trees; the problems have been going on for a long time and are not to be solved so easily merely by giving up one or other of these activities. The trends are produced by very basic transformations of our social organisation. He speaks for many other scientists when he says that he does not expect these trends to be diverted or reversed. We are going to have to live with them. In which case, the question is about the kinds of social organisation best able to deal with the global threat. Such a question falls right into the court of the sociologists.

A biologist asks: »What images are appropriate for thinking about an Earth transformed by human action?« (Clark:11) One group of ecologists seems to use a model of the Garden of Eden spoiled by human misdoings; another prefers the model of a garden that needs a lot of care. Another asks what kind of society can be envisaged that will be able to deliver the care? To me and to many the question seems urgent. I am convinced by the evidence that, as far as we can tell, the biosphere is subject to unprecedented strains. I am afraid of holes in the sky and of global warming and floods and droughts, and I also take it for granted that we should be thinking of how to forfend such extremities. But I find that many of my friends mistrust these tales of doom; there have been too many in the past; nature has proved herself to be too robust for them to believe in the advent of a global disaster. Others are fatalists; they believe in the seriousness of the problems as sincerely as I do, but feel that we are totally impotent; we might just as well ignore the warnings, for there is nothing that we can do or ever could have done.

What about our diverse attitudes? What do the sociologists say? Are our views just randomly distributed? just psychological? Or is there an underlying cultural explanation for our respective optimism, fatalism and pessimism? In an

interesting set of surveys in the 1970's Stephen Cotgrove<sup>6</sup> found that the British public tended to fall into two groups taking opposite views of the stability and resilience of nature: on the one hand some respondents whom he dubbed the cornucopians believed in the unendingly lavish bounty of nature, and so could not get worried about rumours of resources drying up; on the other hand respondents whom he called the catastrophists believed that nature is fragile and unable to resist the crash that is just round the corner. Roughly speaking these divergent views of nature were interpreted as justifications for the correlated preferences expressed by the same subjects on political or economic issues.

The idea that polarised views of nature enter into any well-developed cultural debate is central to my own work as an anthropologist. I am about to argue that if sociologists wish to comment on the social component in the transformation of the environment they would do well to join the anthropologists and think systematically<sup>7</sup> about culture. First they might like to do a little auto-analysis and decide whether they are cornucopians, catastrophists or fatalists, and having recognized their own position they might like to consider whether it enters their larger agenda for life and art. If their attitude to nature turns out to be not very relevant in upholding any of the rest of their serious thinking, I would be inclined to count them along with the fatalists, those who think it may or may not be true but in either case regard it as no concern of theirs. It will be a help in following the argument to have made up your mind as to where you stand.

Cornucopians! Catastrophists! Fatalists! As we listen to the Biosphere scientists we match their narrative with our own narrative about how the world ought to be, and is. And so, according to its fit, we doubt or believe.

What is culture? I take it to be an ongoing, never resolved argument about rightness of choice. Following Pierre Bourdieu I take high culture to be an argument about taste, and I take low culture to be an argument about morals. In both the stakes are heavy.<sup>8</sup> In the debate one side is striving to capture and control legitimacy for themselves, the other to defend the control they have. Argument is too soft a word for the struggle. Since the winning side gains legitimacy, there is little left for the losers but drastic down-grading or exile. Both arguments (about taste and morality) take place within an existing framework of power and authority, consequently within a structured framework (that Bourdieu calls *habitus*). Being structured means of course that culture cannot affirm all things. Something affirmed means something else denied. Blindspots and unthinking rejection are just as essential to culture as seeing and affirming. The great merit of this view is that it systematically connects the cognitive and affective side of culture to the strategies of the contestants for legitimacy.<sup>9</sup> Their rhetorical and other strategies can be analysed as part of their struggle to create the good society.

We seem to be very short on models of the good society. Over the last 300 years the winning side in the cultural debates of the world has successfully presented a steady, cumulative argument in favour of expansion, individual freedom, the sloughing off of chains and shackles. As we saw, expansion has indeed taken place. The image of restriction is a menacing spectre of blind superstition and unreason. And yet, as I hear the ecologists, there will be a need for legitimate control on a global scale. While legitimacy is as hard as ever to achieve, the message of the scientists is that the social component in the matter of the biosphere is about legitimate authority. It goes almost without saying that to put the cultural machine into reverse after 300 years is deeply counter-cultural. For some the prospect is so contradictory and unacceptable to their active role in the cultural debates that either they say nothing or they are forced to take the negative position of unbelief.

An expressive sociology speaks for the dominant culture to which the profession belongs. It speaks with a strong voice when it defends its cultural ideals. It can and must express the sorrows of the oppressed. It can and must denounce injustice. Far be it from me to imply even faintly that sociology should not be fully engaged in the cultural struggle of its time, and fully expressive. But it needs to wear another hat when thinking about the threat to the biosphere. To enter this debate we need a reflexive sociology. That would be a sociology temporarily detached from its normal expressive functions. Sociology would need to stand outside of itself and its cultural niche. It might need to consider what kind of society would be able to curb the cultural pressure which it faithfully serves under its other hat, the cultural pressure to delegitimize control and to license ever more exploiting, escaping and expanding.

A reflexive culture that takes all sides at once is a contradiction, but I don't think that the idea of a reflexive sociology is absurd. It only needs to set a deliberate trap to catch the reflexive moments in which we privately indulge. Individually we are capable of great honesty and insight. We can see our postures as responding to institutional pressures. We are individually capable of recognizing ourselves in the *Other* and, without losing sight of the quality of otherness, we are individually capable of embracing the stranger. Cultural analysis can try to do formally what we do informally and privately. Cultural analysis can make a gimmick to capture formally the coherence and rightness of other possible positions in any cultural debate. My platform today is to invite sociologists to join the exercise, and my task is to explain it.

Cultural analysis comes in several forms and deals with a whole range of questions. For the issue in hand I want to present some of the work of Michael Thompson and other anthropologists who have studied the ecologists' views of nature.<sup>10</sup> They find that for any position we might want to take about the fragility

or the resilience of nature, there is a practical ecologists' view that we could cite to back our case. Certain »myths of nature« circulate among natural resource ecologists who manage forests, fisheries or grazing lands. The ecologists in question observe how the managed eco-systems are modified by the humans. Making suggestions about how to improve their own work they are particularly interested in management problems, that is, in how things go wrong. Thus their concern is on trying to avoid surprises. Four kinds of myths about nature's predictability emerge from their reports.

Nature is capricious,  
Nature is fragile,  
Nature is robust,  
Nature is only robust within limits.

Each of these myths is represented by a little picture of a ball in a landscape.



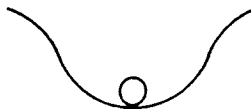
1. The myth of capricious nature has the ball rolling anywhere on a flat plane. There is no knowing what it will do next, and no use theorizing about it. This gives grounding for the fatalist whose agnosticism is at least theoretically safe from surprises sprung by nature.



2. The myth of fragile nature has the ball on the top of a mound, delicately poised in the only place it can be in equilibrium. The smallest shift will roll it off the landscape altogether. For an example of a theory based on this kind of myth they cite the Malthusian prophecy of overpopulation.



3. The myth that nature is robust has the ball in the bottom of a curve; which ever way it is pushed off centre it can only roll back into position again. (For an example of this kind of grounding myth, Timmerman cites Adam Smith's theory of the invisible hand, where all perturbations will work out for the good.) This is the myth that encourages bold, individualistic experimentation, expansion and technological development.

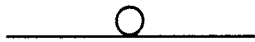


4. When nature is robust within limits the ball is in a dip between two hillocks; it can roll within specific limits and be expected to come back safely, but too big a push risks sending it over the edge of the containing frame. This is the myth to encourage risk-averse planning controls, government intervention, restrictions on the market.

The anthropologists have matched the four myths of nature favoured by practical ecologists to four positions in the cultural struggle.



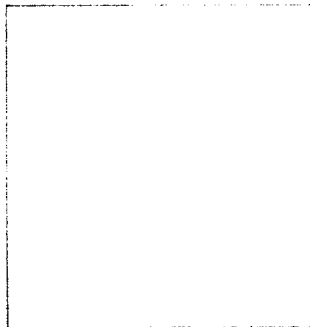
Fatalists:  
Nature Capricious



Hierarchists:  
Nature robust  
within limits



Entrepreneurial Expansionists:  
Nature robust



Communards:  
Nature fragile

Myth is not being used here in any derogatory sense. Each of the ecological views is as fully justifiable as the others. Each sums up an enormous experience and vast array of learning about humans interacting in eco-systems. There is no way that any of them could be proved right or wrong except in the event. The research that I am outlining much too briefly is a cultural theory of surprise.<sup>11</sup> The collaborators on the surprise research have taken a start from my own account of four kinds of social strategies, with their concomitant beliefs.<sup>12</sup> These come out of two dimensions of social relations, collectivist/individualist, unstructured/structured. The four positions each combines a preferred pattern of social relations with certain values which justify and sustain the preference. The theory is that elements of each position form a distinctive, unified cultural package which cannot be unpacked or re-combined without radical social change.

My own research interest has been in the recurrence of these stable cultural patterns and their associated social structures. The surprise theorists have taken it much further. They have reformulated the cultural patterns in ecological terms. Working with biologists it was a step to mutual understanding to describe each cultural pattern as a specialised use of resources, each using the environment in ways that are incompatible with the needs of the other cultural types; the grand cultural debate is comparable to the struggle between species competing for ecological dominance. The strategies deployed in the struggle by each cultural form map on to an appropriate »myth of nature«. Each myth is used as a rhetorical re-

source in the cultural struggle. Furthermore, the use of the myth feeds back to the persons who deploy it so that it forms part of their view of the way the world is. This makes good sense. People are not knaves and fools; they believe and act upon their belief. The myth of nature comes as part of the package that they have chosen when they opted for a cultural form. Within that package it is totally convincing that nature is fragile; or robust; or only robust within constraints; or just capricious, whichever is the right myth for the rest of the argument. Consequently we can expect that, being sincere and clever, everyone will have put their money where their mouth is. The comunards will have been reducing their demands on nature as they beseech the rest of us to do the same; the entrepreneurs will have gone on with their expansionist policies; the hierarchists will have been trying to plan and control, while the fatalists stand back and mock their futile efforts.

For surprise research the object of trying to understand cultural bias is to work out the kinds of surprises that each culture lays up in store for itself. Supposing in the event nature turns out to be really ephemeral and the biosphere splits and slides away; then the communards will not be surprised. Saying »We told you so« will be small comfort to themselves and to the surprise-holders, in this case the entrepreneurs and the hierarchists. But supposing in the event nature turns out to be robust enough to take all the punishment we mete out to her. Then the surprise-holders will be the communards. They will find that they didn't need to have reduced their style of life, that they have gained little while their opponents have made large fortunes. And so it goes on. The only people who will get no surprise are the fatalists because they made no bets. I am always intrigued to know how they manage to remain so detached.

For today my main interest in the surprise game, as it is called, is its opening upon reflexivity. In this account what is said in the cultural debate is believed and acted upon and to some extent self-confirming until the big moment of surprise. My argument above led to the point at which I observed how few images we have of good societies. Staying inside the expressive culture, we can only see one good society, our own culture, and the Other as its bad opponent. For the present global problem we would do well to develop gimmicks for appreciating other forms of life, and for contemplating them without rivalry. Such a gimmick, I suggest, is this form of cultural analysis. It presents the social organisation as a cognitive screen. What the social organisation lets through its cultural meshes is seen, what it blocks are the blindspots. The finer the mesh, the finer the nuances. The longer the perspective, the more history can be held in mind. The more varied and numerous the elements, the richer the pattern, the more the variety of strangers and the more levels of inclusion. The more self-conscious the awareness of our negotiators, the more hope for conciliatory and strong counsels.

At this point someone tells me that reflexivity is not a question that can be handled sociologically. Certainly in its literary, and philosophical and psychological aspects many doubts can be raised. Such as, How can we know that others know themselves as knowing subjects? What is consciousness? And self-consciousness? Among sociologists such issues have to be more open to inspection and counting. Even though self-knowledge be internal and private, most of the categories of the Other are public. There is nothing to stop us from comparing modern industrial societies on a count of the sheer number of kinds of people that they legislate for. There may be more or less of nested administrative categories, arranging for us to line up by age, immigrant status, gender, color, birth, education, health, criminality. It should be illuminating to check the varieties of classifications and their numbers and other features of these classifications against other features of the culture.

One of the salutary effects of this gimmick towards reflexivity is that it pushes its practioners to clarify their own preferences. My own preference has emerged as an idealised form of hierarchy. This has always given me to some degree the professional advantage of feeling out of kilter with the times. It gives me a standpoint from which to see that in this 300 year expansionary trend of Western civilization two kinds of cultures have come to dominante, two that are opposed to hierarchy. Today I am arguing that unless we learn to control our cultivated gut response against the idea of hierarchy we will have no models of the good society to counter our longestablished predatory, expansionary trend. By sheer default, among cultural forms hierarchy is the rejected Other. We take it for granted that hierarchy will always fall into traps of routinization and censorship; we see its dangers but have no clear model of how it would be if it worked well. Yet hierarchy is the social form that can impose economies, and make constraints acceptable.

I hope you heard me then. I was using the appropriate myth of nature, that she is only robust within limits, to support my preferred cultural form. I expect to hear you doing the same through this congress.

The argument started with the biosphere and with the question whether it is credible that it is in danger; and if it is, should something be done? and at the very least should not sociologists consider the kind of society that can best deal with global crisis? My use of cultural theory suggests that in each case the response is never purely individual. Trying to think of such basic issues taps into deep emotional reserves. The answers well up from attitudes to authority, to accountability and freedom, and from any other experiences that define the relation of one person to others. The principles tend to be inculcated in the school playground, if not at the mother's knee. We have each been making small choices of whom we like to consort with and how much competition we can bear. The little choices

lead to big institutions in which we feel comfortable and to a way of life that we want to protect. There is no innocent answer to the question of what sort of good society would best cope with a fragile biosphere. So let us not pretend to be innocent.

Finally let me anticipate the disdain of the academic fatalists in our midst. To me, sitting with the hierarchs, convinced that we can and should do something, their disbelief is amazing. For them, my credulity is naive, or my claimed concern is ideologically suspect. Their doubts come at two points: they are skeptical about knowledge and skeptical about effective action. Some of them doubt the possibility of knowledge about anything. They are not quite joining the brahmins and buddhist philosophers who teach that reality is illusion. For the fatalists in anthropology (I cannot speak for those in sociology) skepticism about comparisons and categories does not inhibit them from writing, for it leaves them scope for exploring the cage of their own consciousness. Others doubt whether trying to do something is going to be worth while. This in itself is a form of withdrawal from the world. Some of them are alone, and others belong together in sects or communes. How do they console themselves?

Our academic fatalists in their opting out of choice remind me of the intelligentsia of 19th century Russia described by Isaiah Berlin<sup>13</sup> in his profoundly insightful *Russian Thinkers*. He describes how these radicals came to decide that there was nothing to be done to cure the evils of the time and so embraced the consolations of the romantic movement. There they were, a small educated class, with a hostile, arbitrary government on the one hand and an uncomprehending, oppressed peasantry on the other: there they were, a few, cultivated people, sensitive to the gross injustices of the regime, and nervous of the dangers of reform, dangerous to the regime in which they held a privileged but ineffectual place. German romanticism was a liberation for them in the sense that a liberator doesn't solve problems but transforms them. In Berlin's words, romanticism was a new framework in which »old problems cease to have meaning and new ones appear which have their solutions as it were, already to some degree prefigured in the new universe in which you find yourself . . . « (:123). The new universe was aesthetically refined, personal consciousness was cultivated to a high degree, it was sad but uplifting.

Berlin's description of the intelligentsia seduced away from their radical program by speculations upon appearance and reality has a bearing on my theme. Following Napoleon's invasion, Russia became suddenly aware of Europe and of being in the middle of it, (as we have become aware recently of the globe and ourselves in it). He describes the growth of patriotic nationalism (a growth we also know), and the collective sense of guilt for squalor, poverty, inefficiency and chaos. (And we also know the sense of guilt.) His essay implies that the intelli-

gentsia could have done something. His sardonic tone says that they didn't have to be liberated from their guilt and concern; they could have stayed with it and found ways of being effective for reform.

This is not the lesson I would draw. One cannot say that the young Russian radicals in the 1830's to 50's shouldn't and didn't have to be fatalists. Cultural theory is not judgmental or determinist, not in the least. The example serves several purposes. For doing analytic sociology the intelligentsia of Czarist Russia illustrate the social circumstances in which the fatalist position is attractive. There can be many reasons for opting out of pressing problems: One may be that they seem too overwhelming for correction, and another that thinkers occupy a totally peripheral niche in the distribution of power and influence, and another is that the same thinkers themselves are privileged in the regime they dislike. This response would explain the disbelief and apathy that some sociologists feel in face of the biosphere threat.

Still withholding judgment, we can recognize Isaiah Berlin himself as an example of another position. A centralist, avoiding the periphery, he clearly believes that concern can be transmuted into responsibility. This is the position from which the hierarchy looks at life. As far as biosphere doom is concerned, the hierarchists are practicing believers. It is terrifying and something should be done. Right or wrong, they will do something. The prospect of the hierarchists determining what to do is of course distasteful to the fatalists. But they should argue the case for not believing from an analytic sociological theory and they should not merely perform the expressive functions of their own culture. This is the advantage of taking up cultural theory. And now I will move into the expressive mode myself.

The biosphere is too large. There are smaller worlds in which cultural analysis can be applied to disbelief, for example, the so-called social sciences which would do well occasionally to move out of their expressive mode, refraining from ardent defense of their cultural positions. To justify their role as analysts the social sciences absolutely need to get distance from their own commitments. Cultural theory is a tool to dispel the fog of expressive propaganda. Cultural analysis is a practice that forces argument on to a franker plane; disputants find themselves arguing directly about how they want decisions to be taken and what kind of society they want, and then how they expect it to function, and from there they are led to their own myths of nature. Is it a ball that might slide anywhere? is it robust? is it fragile? And human nature too: cultural theory will not let disputants espouse one view of human nature that is incompatible with their view of society and nature. In this perspective sociological argument loses none of its interest.

This being so, and cultural theory having so many merits, I find it hard to understand why you, the sociologists, can want to stand aside. I would like to

persuade you out of your apathy and disbelief. Perhaps you regard the tasks of cultural theory to be impossible, the problems too overwhelming, the results too uncomfortable. Whatever the cause of your having so far refrained from joining in the practice of this method, I am standing within the branch of the social sciences that I have been trained in and speaking in the expressive mode, inviting you to be here too.

## Notes

- 1 Efron, Edith (1984): *The Apocalyptic. Cancer and the Big Lie*. (NY. Simon and Schuster).
- 2 Douglas, Mary and Wildavsky, Aaron (1982): *Risk and Culture, an essay on the Selection of Technological Risk* (California University Press).
- 3 Clark, William (1986): »Sustainable Development of the Biosphere: themes for a research program«, in: W. Clark and R. E. Munn (ed.), *Sustainable Development of the Biosphere* (Cambridge UP), p. 5-48.
- 4 Clark: p. 6.
- 5 Richards, J. F. »World Environmental History and Economic Development«, ch. 2 in Clark and Munn 1986, *op. cit.*
- 6 Cotgrove, Stephen (1982): *Catastrophe or Cornucopia?* (Wiley).
- 7 The key word here is »systematic«. There are plenty of schemes in circulation which purport to explain attitudes and behaviour, the logical connections between the scheme and what it explains are either very weak (as in the case of Maslow's model of social conscience developing when primary needs have been met), or absent (as in the case of »Life Styles« and »Values« models current in market research).
- 8 Bourdieu, Pierre (1974): *La Distinction: Critique sociale du Jugement* (Paris, Editions de Minuit).
- 9 Some anthropologists write as if culture were unanalysable and autonomous, but this is a professional stance close to fatalism, in so far as it denies the possibility of knowledge and the worthwhileness of trying to know.
- 10 Thompson, Michael (1983): »A cultural basis for comparison« (pages 233-260) Postscript to *Risk analysis and Decision Process; the Siting of Liquefied Energy Gas Facilities in Four Countries*, editors Howard Kunreuther and Joanne Linnerooth (Springer-Verlag).
- 11 Thompson, Michael and Tayler, Paul (1986): »The Surprise Game: An Exploration of Constrained Relativism« WP-04, The Aston-Warwick Scale Papers. Institute for Management, Research and Development, University of Warwick, Coventry.
- Timmermann, Paul (1986): »Mythology and surprise in the sustainable development of the biosphere«, ch. 16:435-452 in Clark and Munn, *op.cit.*
- Holling, C.S., Ed. (1978): *Adaptive Environmental Assessment and Management* (Wiley). Holling uses another set of terms: capricious, ephemeral, benign and perverse/tolerant. The terms I have used are intended to convey the same meaning while fitting better into this present discussion.
- 12 Douglas, Mary (1970): *Natural Symbols, Explorations in Cosmology* (Penguins).
- 13 Berlin, I. (1978): *Russian Thinkers*, edited Henry Hardy and Aileen Kell (Viking Press).